



Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



Richard J. Bruckner
Director

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FROM: Karen Lafferty, Supervising Regional Planner *KL*
Ordinance Studies Section

SUBJECT: RPC Agenda of March 23, 2011 – AGENDA ITEM # 7

**GREEN BUILDING TECHNICAL MANUAL UPDATE
PROJECT NUMBER R2007-02988-(1 – 5)
CASE NUMBER RADV200700025-(1 – 5)**

BACKGROUND

California's Global Warming Solutions Act requires greenhouse gas emissions to be lowered to 1990 levels by 2020, and to 80 percent of 1990 levels by 2050. In response to this mandate, Los Angeles County created and implemented the Green Building Program (Program), which includes: the Green Building, Drought Tolerant Landscaping, and Low Impact Development Ordinances (Ordinances); the Green Building Technical Manual (Manual); and, the Green Building Program Implementation Task Force (Task Force).

The Ordinances went into effect on January 1, 2009, setting green standards for all new development in unincorporated Los Angeles County. At the same time, the Manual was created as a companion piece to the Green Building and Drought-Tolerant Landscaping Ordinances to assist homeowners, building industry professionals and project applicants in achieving compliance with the requirements of the Program. The Task Force is responsible for promoting the Program and providing recommendations to the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) and the County Board of Supervisors (Board) for the sustainability of the Program.

The Manual explains the requirements for the: (1) Green Building Ordinance, which requires use of materials and techniques that improve energy efficiency and create less air and emission pollution; and, (2) Drought-Tolerant Landscaping Ordinance, which requires landscaping with specific plant species with very low to low water needs, and

limits high-maintenance plants and water-soaking turf. Finally, the Manual also serves as a resource to help applicants and residents build sustainable practices into new developments. The Low Impact Development (LID) Ordinance and the LID Manual are implemented and maintained by the Department of Public Works.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Ordinance and the Manual are intended to promote sustainable development, improve air and water quality, conserve energy, water and raw materials, and reduce carbon emissions into the environment throughout the county.

Based on direction from the Task Force in April 2010, the Green Building Technical Manual February 2010 Edition must be revised to incorporate the latest updates from the third-party systems, including standards and checklists, as referenced in the Manual. As defined in the Green Building Ordinance (Section 22.52.2130.E), changes to the Manual must be referred to the RPC for public hearing and action. Changes to the Manual do not need to be considered by the Board, although changes to the Ordinance do. Staff is not recommending modifications to the ordinances at this time.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

2010 California Green Building Standards Code - CALGreen

CALGreen is the new name for Part 11 of Title 24 (California Building Standards Code) of the California Code of Regulations. As of January 1, 2011, CALGreen applies to both residential and nonresidential uses and is further divided among specific building types and among the four state agencies – Building Standards Commission, Department of Housing and Community Development, Division of the State Architect, and Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development – that carry specific authority over certain building standards.

Within each building classification, CALGreen establishes a set of mandatory provisions and two separate sets of voluntary code provisions. The sets of voluntary measures are referred to as CALGreen Tier 1 and CALGreen Tier 2. Municipalities are required to adopt the mandatory provisions but can also choose to incorporate the voluntary measures as part of the local building standards. Since the voluntary measures are more stringent than the regular code, however, cities and counties may be required to file a finding of need statement with the Building Standards Code in order to locally adopt the voluntary measures as mandatory.

CALGreen is designed to gradually add environmentally-friendly measures in subsequent iterations. In this respect, the voluntary Tier 1 and Tier 2 measures of the 2011 code are worth noting as potential harbingers of mandatory standards to come.

County of Los Angeles Building Code (Titles 26 – 31)

In November 2010, the Board of Supervisors adopted multiple ordinances that updated and set forth provisions and regulations for Titles 26 to 29 (the Building Code, Electrical Code, Plumbing Code, and Mechanical Code), as required by state law. At the same time, the Board adopted two new ordinances—Titles 30 (Residential Code) and 31 (Green Building Standards Code) to the Los Angeles County Code. All of the adopted ordinances contained changes that are reasonably necessary due to local climatic, geological, or topographical conditions.

Titles 21 (Subdivision) and 22 (Zoning) were not modified at that time. However, the regulations within Title 31 are consistent with Titles 21 and 22.

EXISTING DOCUMENT

Currently, the Green Building Technical Manual February 2010 Edition is available on the Regional Planning Green Building website at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/green>. Prepared by the Department of Regional Planning, the Manual contains: an introduction, including an overview of green building, sustainability and the Green Building Program, as well as a list of definitions; a summary of the County's green building standards; details on three applicable third-party rating systems and checklists, namely Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) V2, GreenPoint Rated™ 2007, and California Green Builder; an explanation of drought-tolerant landscaping, descriptions of the County's planting zones, an approved plant list, and information on hydrozoning and community gardens; a resources section that includes listings for green building materials and landscaping; and, a brief section on incentives.

DISCUSSION OF DRAFT DOCUMENT

The Technical Manual Update (Update) seeks to: (1) bring the information on third-party rating systems up to date, as required by the Ordinance and advised by the Task Force; and, (2) streamline the text with minor edits to make it slimmer and more user-friendly. Rather than including the new rating systems and corresponding checklists, guidelines and frequently asked questions in their entirety, as in the previous version of the Manual, the Update instead contains brief summaries of each of the above items with hyperlinks to the respective sources' websites. This approach will make future updates easier to implement while resulting in a leaner, greener Manual.

Specifically, the proposed Draft Update (**Attachment A**) includes updated information from LEED regarding the new rating systems and checklists contained in LEED V3, which was completed in 2009, and GreenPoint Rated, which was updated last year in anticipation of the implementation of CALGreen. As of January 2011, the California Green Builder program, which was established and administered by the California Building Industry Association's Building Industry Institute, was dissolved. Therefore, reference to the California Green Builder program must be removed from the Manual.

About Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)

The LEED Green Building rating system was developed by the US Green Building Council (USGBC) as a national consensus standard for green buildings and serves as a benchmark for green development. LEED is the only system that addresses all types of new construction, including commercial, industrial, retail, schools, health care facilities, and homes. A project may earn certification from the USGBC if it meets certain prerequisites and performance benchmarks credits within each category: Sustainable Sites; Water Efficiency; Energy and Atmosphere; Materials and Resources; Indoor Environmental Quality; and, Innovation and Design.

Projects are rated by the Green Building Certification Institute and are awarded Certified, Silver, Gold, or Platinum certification depending on the number of credits they achieve. To achieve certification and a LEED seal, the developer is required to register and pay for LEED certification from the USGBC.

LEED V3 (2009) revisions include modifying the following rating systems: New Construction and Major Renovations; Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance; Commercial Interiors; Core and Shell Development; Schools New Construction and Major Renovations; and, Retail New Construction.

Some of the notable advancements of LEED V3 compared with LEED 2.2 are:

LEED Prerequisite / Credit Alignment and Harmonization

A structure to consolidate, align and update all existing LEED Rating Systems into their “most effective common denominator” providing a pool of prerequisites/credits for all LEED Rating Systems.

Predictable Development Cycle

LEED is moving into a predictable development cycle that will help drive continuous improvements in LEED and allow the market to participate more fully in LEED’s growth and development.

Transparent Environmental/Human Impact Credit Weighting

LEED has undergone a scientifically grounded re-weighting of credits, which more accurately reflects a credit point impact on the environment and human health, both positive and negative.

Regionalism

Incentives are provided through LEED Innovation & Design style bonus points that will add value to those credits that are considered most important for defined regions.

For specific details regarding major changes from LEED-NC V2.2 to LEED-NC 2009, please refer to **Attachment B**. To reference the LEED CalGreen Comparison Guide, please refer to **Attachment C**. For a detailed comparison of CalGreen non-residential

requirements and LEED for Building Design and Construction 2009, please refer to **Attachment D**.

USGBC has also improved its online offering and modified its certification program. Work has already begun on the next cycle of updates, which will be published in 2012.

About GreenPoint Rated™ (GPR)

The GPR system is a California-specific program managed by Build It Green™ (BIG), a non-profit California-based organization. The system includes programs for New and Existing single family and multifamily residential buildings. GPR is accompanied by a comprehensive GreenPoint Rater Manual, which clearly identifies the criteria and verification for each measure.

The GPR program provides a menu of items from which the builder can choose, with a minimum of points required from five different categories: Energy Efficiency; Water Efficiency; Indoor Air Quality; Resource Conservation; and, Sustainable Community Issues. The menu items are tailored to meet the California climate, building code, and other regulatory conditions, such as Title 24 energy efficiency standards. Prerequisites for all new homes using this system include exceeding 2008 Title 24 standards by 10% to 15% and requiring a minimum 50% of waste diversion. New homes are rated by third-party trained and certified GreenPoint Raters and a rated home achieving 50 points may be certified as a Green Rated Home.

The changes to GPR are directly linked to the recently adopted statewide CALGreen code. BIG has modified the GPR checklist to include and align with all of the CALGreen mandatory requirements. As many of the CALGreen mandatory measures were taken from GPR, modifications are minor. For a detailed comparison of CalGreen measures and GPR, please see **Attachments E to G**.

Some added measures do not earn points toward certification, but are included on the checklist for ease of verification necessary for a local jurisdiction and to facilitate the use of a GreenPoint Rated as an ordinance tool. Finally, verification protocols for GreenPoint Rated have been refined over years of use and can be helpful in compliance of the specific CALGreen measures.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

This project has been determined to be categorically exempt from the environmental reporting requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Class 8 (Actions by regulatory agencies for protection of the environment).

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Notice of the public hearing was sent via mail or email to the Green Building Courtesy List and all County Public Libraries on February 19, 2011, and advertised in *The Los Angeles Times* (**Attachment H**).

AGENCY AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

As of March 9, 2011, no comments have been received.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Manual be updated to include the most up-to-date information from LEED and GreenPoint Rated. Staff further recommends removal of the sections pertaining to California Green Builder, which is no longer in existence. The Manual will be streamlined and easy to update in the future.

SUGGESTED MOTION

I MOVE THAT THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING AND APPROVE THE DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UPDATING THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES GREEN BUILDING TECHNICAL MANUAL 2011 EDITION TO INCLUDE THE LATEST VERSIONS OF LEED AND BUILD IT GREEN DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCES

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ATTACHMENTS

- A. Draft Technical Manual Update, 2011 Edition
- B. Major Changes from LEED-NC v2.2 to LEED 2009 NC
- C. CALGreen Companion Guide for LEED Projects
- D. CALGreen Non-Residential comparison to LEED for Building Design & Construction 2009
- E. CALGreen Low-Rise Residential comparison to GreenPoint Rated and LEED for Homes
- F. CALGreen Mandatory Measure Comparison For GreenPoint Rated
- G. CALGreen Tier Pre-requisite Provision Review for GreenPoint Rated Comparison (Preliminary)
- H. Notice of Public Hearing